

NEWS RELEASE

Department of Social Services



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State Receives Approval to Implement the Long-Term Care Partnership Program

PIERRE, S.D. – The State of South Dakota is pleased to announce that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has approved South Dakota's Long-Term Care Partnership State Plan Amendment, with an effective date of July 1, 2007, allowing the state to pursue public-private partnerships for long-term care insurance options available to consumers.

“This announcement from the federal government allows the State of South Dakota to implement the Long-Term Care Partnership Program,” stated Gov. Mike Rounds. “By working together, this public-private partnership will offer individuals quality, affordable long-term care insurance and a way to receive needed care without depleting all their assets.”

The Long-Term Care Partnership Program, administered by the Department of Social Services and the Division of Insurance, provides an alternative to spending down or transferring assets by forming a partnership between Medicaid and private long-term care insurers. Partnership policies will be tax qualified plans under federal law and provide inflation protection benefits for purchasers. Once private insurance benefits are exhausted, special Medicaid eligibility rules are applied if additional coverage is necessary.

South Dakota is also one of ten states, selected through a competitive process, to receive a technical assistance grant of \$50,000 to put towards the efforts of this program. Funding has been provided by the Center for Health Care Strategies, Inc. (www.chcs.org) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (www.rwjf.org).

Later this fall, education will be available to the public through free Long-Term Care Partnership Program Education Sessions, along with written materials and a newly developed website containing useful information about the program to help consumers make informed decisions about the choices that best fit their future care needs.

“This is an exciting opportunity for South Dakotans,” concluded Gov. Rounds. “Thinking about care choices before you need them, as well as how to finance your long-term care, gives you more options and more time to choose what is right for you and your family.”

For more information on what the state is doing to implement the Long-Term Care Partnership Program, please contact Emily Currey at 605-773-3165 or Emily.Currey@state.sd.us.

Media Note: Press kits with more information will be available to the media later this summer.